

value, the highest in over a hundred years. There will come a day when most people come to realize the fraud associated with Social Security and the inability for it to continue as currently managed. Rising oil and natural gas prices, it is argued, are not inflationary, yet they are playing havoc with the pocket-books of most Americans. The economies of Asia, and in particular Japan, will not offer any assistance in dealing with the approaching storm in this country. Our foreign policy, which continues to obligate our support around the world, shows no signs of changing and will contribute to the crisis and possibly our bankruptcy.

What must we do? We should develop more sensible priorities. We must restore confidence in freedom and recognize how free markets can solve our problems. We must have more respect for the Rule of Law and demand that Congress, the Courts, and the President live within the Rule of Law and stop arbitrarily flaunting the Constitution. If the Constitution is to be changed, it should be changed slowly and deliberately as is permitted, but never by fiat. We must eventually reconsider the notion of the original constitutional Republic as designed by our Founders. The monolithic centralized state was not the design nor is it supported by the Constitution. We were meant to have loose knit individual states with the states themselves managing their own affairs.

The political impasse we now see with the election process along with the divisions in the House and Senate is surely related to the economic and budgetary impasse that plagues Washington. Since interventionism (the planned welfare state) is unworkable and will fail, the surprising developments in this presidential election will accelerate its demise. The two are obviously related.

ENSURING FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE IN ELECTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on November 7, 2000, some of the people were able to exercise their will. I believe that all of the people of this great Republic and great Nation should have that opportunity. Now we find ourselves, our eyes, the Nation's eyes, the world's eyes, on the great State of Florida.

First, let me thank my colleagues, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER), and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH) for their leadership, along with the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. FOWLER) in trying to explain to the American people what is happening in their great State.

I think the real key has to be that we must listen to the people of that State, the people of Florida, and, although so many of us would want to cast our opinions and our viewpoints, it is time

now to let their will be heard. I think it is a very strong will; and, if we watch what is going on in Florida, we will see that the first order of recount was driven by the law of the State of Florida.

I was in Nashville, Tennessee, as the numbers began to crumble, and it was about 3 a.m. in the morning when the votes that were originally called for Governor Bush now deteriorated to just a difference of 569 votes between Vice President Gore and Governor Bush. So a recount was triggered, not by the Vice President or by the Governor, but by the laws of the State of Florida.

The recount was then further activated, if you will, by the laws of that State and the will of the people. They are asking that their recount be allowed to proceed. I believe it is extremely difficult to address the concerns of an accurate count without allowing an accurate count to take place. There were ballot deficiencies and irregularities. There was the butterfly ballot that confused many of the voters.

I have listened to the political pundits and media pundits. I am offended by insulting and making fun of those individuals who say that they had difficulty. In fact, I have heard and understand that many did ask, "could I get another ballot," or try to determine whether that could happen, and, unfortunately, in the rush of activities, they were told not.

I believe in "we, the people," and I think the focus should be on the people of Florida. I come from a county of about 1 million. 995,000 people voted in Harris County. We only discarded 6,000 votes in Harris County, Texas. But yet, in this county in Florida, 19,000 ballots were discarded. That is, of course, an exception, an aberration, that should be addressed.

I think it is unfair for the Secretary of State to demand that all be in by 5 o'clock on tomorrow. That is not responding to the will of the people. Let their voices be heard. It is evident by the decision that was made by the Federal judge today that ruled against eliminating the recounting that the people of Florida want. The judge called the Republican argument serious, but turned them aside, saying it was a matter for the State, not Federal courts, to decide.

Vice President GORE today said something that I think should apply reasonably to all of our thought processes. He said, "That is why I have believed from the start that, while time is important, it is even more important that every vote is counted and counted accurately."

There is no constitutional crisis here. Let us stop raising the ante. Let us stop spinning it so that people are in fear. I know there is a bit of humor around the world, but I believe we live

in the greatest nation, and I am still proud of America. So let the world laugh a little bit. They always laugh at people they envy. Let us show them that, in the calm of day and night, we can quietly recount the votes and determine who the next President of the United States will be.

I tell you for one, supporting Vice President GORE, that I am willing to support whoever the new President is, and I would simply ask that person to represent all of us.

It is a tragedy what is going on in the State of Florida with the arguing back and forth, making distinctions about the State of Illinois or the State of New Mexico. The key is that the State of Florida is in play. Those 25 votes will name the next President of the United States, so it is there in the State of Florida where we should be most accurate with the votes.

Frankly, those voters deserve the right to be heard; and they deserve the right to have the questions answered about irregularities in the balloting, of being turned away, of being stopped, as they will.

I would ask the Secretary of State of that particular great State that she should listen to the people of the State. Does Governor Bush want Republican counties to be counted? I have no problem with that. I believe in fairness and justice, and if those counties can be recounted, then so be it. Yes, there will be further tests when the votes come in from the absentee balloting, and I believe that will be an added addition.

Mr. Speaker, I would simply hope that we allow the will of the people to be heard in their totality.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I make a point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, is it not appropriate under the rules of the House that those in the gallery not express their favor or disfavor to a statement on the floor by a Member?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, could the Chair remind those in the gallery that that is inappropriate; that they are represented in the House by their representative, and they should not express their opinion for or against statements made on the floor?

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House, and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings or other audible conversation is in violation of the rules of the House.